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Ag in the Classroom

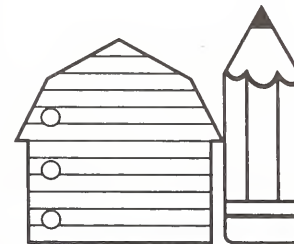
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United States
Department of
Agriculture



A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom Program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact the AITC Director, Room 3407, South Bldg., USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-0991. 202/720-7925.

MARCH/APRIL 95
Vol. X, No. 1

National Conference Planned for June 10 - 13

"Agriculture's Investment: Teaching Children" is the theme for the National Ag in the Classroom Conference scheduled for June 10 - 13 in Washington, D.C. The national conference brings together teachers, agricultural experts, curriculum designers, and others who are concerned about promoting agricultural literacy in our nation's next generation.

In a sense, this conference will bring the program back to its "roots"—it will be held at the Hotel Washington, site of the very first National Conference. This beautiful hotel, which overlooks the White House, has served Washington, D.C., for more than 75 years.

Continued on page 6



*The National Ag in the
Classroom Conference
offers opportunities to
learn about new materi-
als and to network with
teachers and Ag in the
Classroom Programs.*

Director's Notes

From the Director:

As of January 5, 1995, I assumed the duties of Director for the Ag in the Classroom program. It has been an exciting and hectic few months as we get the program back on track, promote our mission, and organize the 1995 national conference.

Please note that our address and phone number have changed. We can now be reached at 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 4307 South Building, USDA, Washington, DC 20250 or by phone by calling (202) 720-7925 or FAX on (202) 690-0062.

We hope you will join us for the national conference on June 10-13, 1995. We are looking forward to another great conference.

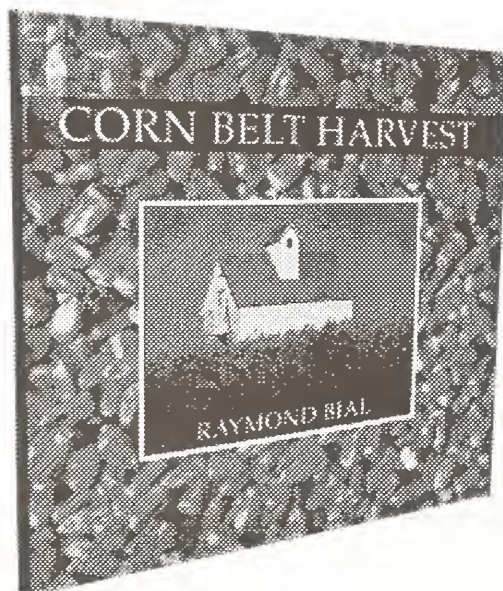
Sincerely,



Elizabeth A. Wolanyk
Director

Book Corner: Corn Belt Harvest

Children's author and photographer Raymond Bial gives children a comprehensive view of growing and harvesting corn in Corn Belt Harvest.



Corn is the most abundant grain in the Western Hemisphere, and the United States produces more than half the corn grown in the world. More than three-fourths of it is grown in the region known as the Corn Belt. In Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, thousands of acres are devoted to planting and growing corn.

Corn Belt Harvest, by children's author and photographer Raymond Bial, helps children understand the process of planting, growing, and harvesting corn. It also explains the many products-

-some familiar and some not so well known—that are made from corn.

An important social studies concept in upper elementary grades is understanding how a raw material becomes a finished product. Corn Belt Harvest would be an excellent resource for teachers. Students learn facts and statistics (corn production has increased yield from 25 bushels per acre in the 1930s to 120 bushels an acre in 1990). They also learn vocabulary words, for example, *tilth*—the ability of the soil to aggregate, or hold together.

Throughout the book, children see photographs of the machinery required to grow and harvest corn. They also learn about the "explosion of activity" that occurs at harvest time. "Everywhere corn gleams brightly in the sunlight," Bial writes. "As long as the weather holds, the harvest continues for twelve hours or more each day. Even working these long hours, it may take two to four weeks to bring it all in."

"When the trucks, tractors, and combines are put away for the winter," the book concludes, "farmers look back at the harvest and a job well done. They also look forward to another growing season with hope and anticipation."

Corn Belt Harvest was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1991. Single copies are \$14.95.

Proof that Ag in the Classroom Works!

Teachers always hope children will apply what they've learned in class. As a kindergarten teacher, that is always Joanne Booth's goal. A major cereal manufacturer, however, may wish that Booth's students hadn't been quite so knowledgeable . . . or quite so observant.

This is Booth's twelfth year teaching kindergarten at the Greenwich Central Elementary School in Greenwich, New York. ("That's upstate," she says, "not Greenwich Village.") Because she lives on a working dairy farm and also raises beef cattle, she says, "I just naturally incorporate agriculture into my classroom." Although Washington County is rural, Booth has only one student from a working farm, so her stories of doing chores and raising animals are fascinating to her students.

Greenwich is one of many elementary schools with a school breakfast program. "Kindergartners love bringing the little cereal boxes back to the class," she explains. When she discovered that the children thought Apple Jacks were made from apples, she taught them to read the list of ingredients on the side of the package.

Shortly thereafter, a child was doing what Mrs. Booth had suggested. But, he wondered, why did the ingredients on the Corn Pops box say the cereal was made from corn—while the picture on the back of the package clearly showed wheat?

So the children put their letter-writing skills into practice. They wrote a letter to Kellogg's pointing out

the mistake. "We received a letter saying that they tried very hard to do things correctly, and they were very glad we were so observant." Booth reports, adding that the children were excited to receive an answer.

How do kindergartners respond to Ag in the Classroom? "They eat it up," Booth replies. In the spring, the class always studies embryology. Children make predictions about the color the chicks will be, how many there will be, and when they will hatch. They learn that baby chicks are not all yellow.

Children apply what they've learned in other lessons to their agriculture experience as well. Each year, she reports, there are one or two chickens born with crooked feet. "They apply what they've learned in Family Life and call those our 'chickens with disabilities,'" she says.

Because Booth receives as many questions from adults as she does from children, she's decided to develop some ag activities for her colleagues as well. She's planning an Ag Mystery Day. Teachers will be asked to answer questions or identify objects associated with agriculture. The winner will receive an ice cream cone. "We'll be educating the adults as well as the children," she says.



Kindergarten teacher Joanne Booth's students could teach even a major manufacturer a thing or two about agriculture.



Videos Bring Agriculture Into the Classroom

In an era when most children do not live on farms, it's difficult for teachers to teach them the basic vocabulary of agriculture. One teacher recently lamented that even

the traditional nursery rhyme "Mary Had a Little Lamb" was unfamiliar to her children, who had never seen a lamb or felt its fleece.

Summer on the Farm

Summer on the Farm Series

1261 East Lake Road
Skaneateles, NY 13152
1-315-636-8044

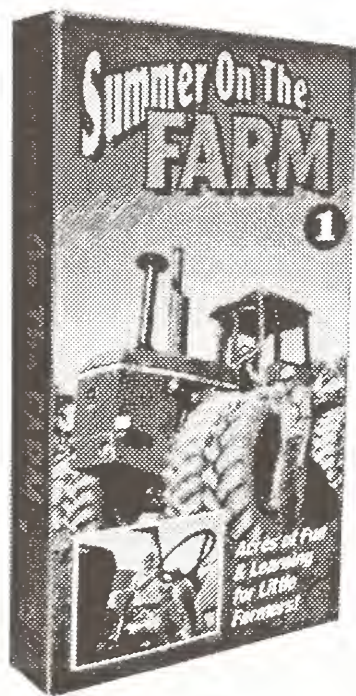
For 20 years, Rick and Chris Fesko have been answering visitors' questions about their family farm operation: What is a combine? How is corn planted? What's inside a silo? They've collected their answers to these and many other questions in a 30-minute video, "Summer on the Farm."

From planting in the spring to the harvest in the fall, this video helps students see what life on the farm is like. Narrator Chris Fesko invites viewers to "visit our farm for the summer."

Children see farm machinery in action—whether it's plowing the fields in the spring, filling a giant plastic bag with silage, changing one of the huge tractor tires, or harvesting corn with the chopper or the combine. Close-up photography gives young viewers a sense of being part of the action.

Safety is an important message of the video. Before operating machinery, Chris and her family fasten their seat belts. They put blocks behind wheels before walking behind them.

An educational edition is licensed for public viewing and includes a teacher's manual and a 10 year guarantee. The 30-minute video is the first in what is intended to be a three-part series. The educational version of the video is available for \$49.95 plus tax and a \$5.00 shipping charge. Quantity discounts are available, or individual copies can be obtained by phoning: 1-800-747-6470 at a reduced price.



Tractors, Combines, and Things on the Grow

Just Our Size Videos

1-800-808-FARM

Young children are fascinated by big machines. "Tractors, Combines, and Things on the Grow" builds on this interest by focusing on the powerful machines that are used to bring food from field to table.

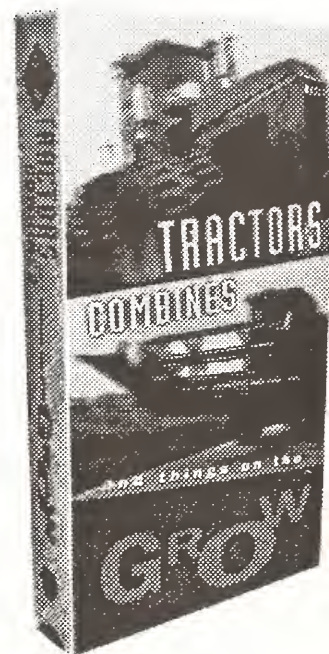
Most preschoolers (and a lot of their older brothers and sisters) think that food comes from the grocery store. This video is designed to help young children understand what happens to food before it arrives on the supermarket shelves.

Shot on location around the country, the video takes children through an entire growing season. Two young narrators and their mother visit farms to watch machinery in action.

Time lapse photography shows a seed germinating and a plant growing. "Awesome" is the comment of the narrator—a view that will probably be shared by most viewers.

Because of the emphasis on machinery, the video includes lots of close-ups action shots—and the sound track features the sounds of many different machines. "Tractors, Combines, and Things on the Grow" is recommended for children age 2 and up, and would be especially good for preschoolers. It has earned the seal of

approval from The American Farm Bureau and the National Corn Growers Association. Single copies are \$19.95 plus \$3.95 for shipping and handling.



Videos can help. By bringing agriculture into the classroom, they can help today's children understand our nation's food and fiber system.

Reviewed on these pages are four recent videos produced for preschoolers and elementary school children. All will be previewed at the National Conference.

Farmtastic AGtion

& I Video Productions
107 Main Street, Suite 200
Deoria, IL 61602
(815) 671-0206

"You know, there's not a day that goes by without our life being affected by what my family and I do," says the narrator of "Farmtastic AGtion" at the beginning of the video. "What we do for a living is important. We farm."

This 19-minute video showcases a farmer's many tasks, as well as providing educational information and a respect for farm safety. Inter-



persed through the video are "farm facts"—letting children know the size of an acre or the number of kernels on an ear of corn.

"Farmtastic AGtion" is not a documentary, and there is less narration than in the other videos reviewed on this page. Instead, explosive music and fast-paced edits show farm machinery in action. At times, it feels like a music video (with farm machines as the "rock stars").

Farm animals—chickens, pigs, cattle, and even a dog or two—are also part of life on the farm. The humorous scenes of animals are sure to please young viewers, who may be surprised to learn that turkeys, bison, and even ostriches are also found on U.S. farms.

The video was produced in cooperation with Sylent, a manufacturer of miniature versions of trucks and farm implements. Single copies of "Farmtastic AGtion" are \$14.95, plus \$3.50 shipping and handling. Illinois residents add 6% tax.

Vrrrooommm! Farming for Kids

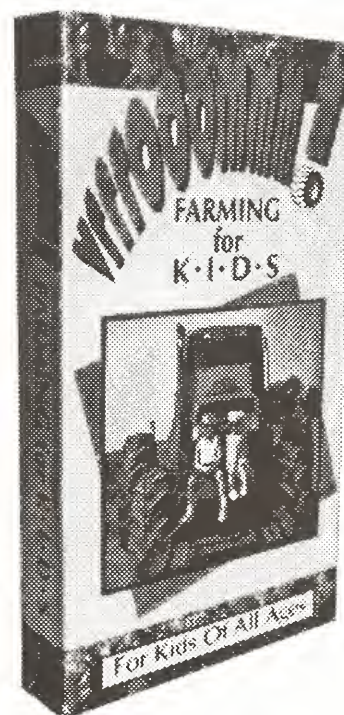
Rainbow Communications
1276 School Road
Victor, NY 14564
1-800-518-FARM

It takes a lot of equipment to grow vegetables and grain—and all of it is interesting to young children. This 30-minute video gives children a close-up view of the fascinating world of big farm machines: plows, cultivators, planters, and various harvesters.

"Vrrrooommm! Farming for Kids" takes children to a 7,000-acre family farm where they watch vegetable and grain production throughout the year. They follow vegetable and grain production as they see wheat, sweet corn, beans, carrots, and cabbage from planting to harvesting.

The narrator uses concrete, real-life examples to help children understand the growing process. They learn that the grain dryer works a lot like their family's clothes dryer—with one important difference. "Can you imagine folding all the laundry that would fit in that dryer?" the narrator asks. The computer is another important piece of farm equipment, and children see that today's agriculture is a high-tech business.

Included with the video is a handy reference card that answers questions children may have about the various pieces of farm equipment. Single copies of "Vrrrooommm!" are \$19.95 plus \$3.95 shipping and handling.



Agriculture's Investment - Teaching Children

1995 National Ag in the Classroom Conference

June 10, 11, 12, 13 1995 • Hotel Washington
Washington, D.C.

Saturday, June 10, 1995

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Noon - 6:00 p.m. | Check-in, registration, set up exhibits |
| 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. | Newcomers Meeting |
| 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. | Reception - Light Buffet |
| | View Exhibits |



Sunday, June 11, 1995

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. | State Contacts Meeting |
| 11:00 a.m. | Exhibit Area Open |
| 11:00 a.m. | Registration open |
| 12:30 p.m. | Lunch with Speaker |
| 2:00 p.m. | 2 minute ideas |
| 2:15 p.m. | Break |
| 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. | Concurrent workshops (to be repeated) |
| 3:45 - 4:45 p.m. | Concurrent workshops |
| 4:45 | Break |
| 6:00 p.m. | Dinner |
| 7:00 p.m. | "AITC at 'The Movies'" - Video Review |
| | Teacher Responder Panel |

Monday, June 12, 1995

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Breakfast (on your own) | |
| 8:30 - 9:45 a.m. | Regional Meetings |
| 9:45 - 10:00 a.m. | Break with Coffee and Juice |
| 10:00 a.m. | General Sessions |
| | Announcements |
| | 2 minute ideas |
| 10:30 - 11:40 a.m. | Roundtable Session |
| 11:40 a.m. | Lunch (on your own) |
| 1:15 - 5:00 p.m. | Tours |
| 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. | United States Department of Agriculture |
| | USDA Visitor Center |
| | USDA Patio |
| 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Reception with Secretary of Agriculture |
| | (planned) |
| | Invite your legislators |

Tuesday, June 13, 1995

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 7:00 - 8:00 a.m. | Continental Breakfast |
| 8:00 - 9:10 a.m. | Roundtable Sessions |
| 9:15 - 10:30 a.m. | Concurrent Workshops |
| 10:40 - 11:50 p.m. | Roundtable Session |
| 11:50 a.m. | Break |
| 12:30 p.m. | Lunch and a Surprise |
| 2:30 - 6:00 p.m. | Possible Special Session - TBA |



Hotel:

The beautiful Washington Hotel, site of the first national AITC conference, overlooks the White House. Make your reservations directly with the hotel by calling 1-800-424-9540. Rooms will be held until the deadline of May 10, 1995 for the conference. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space availability basis. June is a very busy month in Washington—please book by the deadline date.

The room rate is \$105.00 single and \$120.00 double, plus current District of Columbia taxes.

If you would like to share a room with a conference attendee, but cannot find a person to share with, please call the Ag in the Classroom office and we will try to facilitate those arrangements.

Yes, Sign Me Up!

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Teacher? ☐ No ☐ Yes Grade level _____

Address _____

Phone (____) _____ o: (____) _____ Date of arrival: _____ Departure: _____

The REGISTRATION FEE includes all meals listed in program; registration and workshop materials; conference proceedings. (Meals listed as "on your own" are not included in the registration fee.)

Enclosed is my registration fee of:

☐ \$130.00 (postmarked by 5/10/95—no exceptions)

☐ \$160.00 (after 5/10/95)

Make checks payable to USDA and return with this form to: Ag in the Classroom,
Room 4307 South Building, USDA
Washington, DC 20250-0991

Exhibit Space

EXHIBIT SPACE is available at no cost. Special arrangements must be made for the hotel to receive any shipped exhibit items. Call them direct at 202-638-5900.

Do you want to reserve exhibit space at the conference?

☐ No

☐ YES. I will require:

☐ 1 table or ☐ 2 tables

☐ electric outlet

☐ wall space

☐ other: _____

Ag in the Classroom---State Contacts

The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

Alabama

Ms. Jane Alice Lee
2101 Bell Road
Montgomery, AL 36117
205-272-2611

Ms. Brenda Summerlin
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PO Box 3336
Montgomery, AL 36193
205-242-5872

Alaska

Mr. Ted Berry
Alaska AITC
P.O. Box 62
Willow, AK 99688-0062
907-495-1018

Arizona

Ms. Deborah Flowers
3401 East Elwood Street
Phoenix, AZ 85040-1625
(602) 470-0088

Arkansas

Dr. Larry R. Dale
ASU Center for Economic
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P.O. Box 2890
State Univ., AR 72467-2890
501-972-3810

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Mr. Mark Linder
CA Foundation for AITC
1601 Exposition Blvd FB 16
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Colorado

Ms. Helen Davis
Colorado Dept of Agriculture
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Lakewood, CO 80215-5894
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303-686-7806

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Mr. John R. H. Blum
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165 Capitol Avenue, Room 273
Hartford, CT 06106
203-566-4667

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University of Connecticut
249 Glenbrook Rd
Storrs, CT 06269-2093
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Delaware

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Delaware AITC
Delaware Dept. of Ag.
2320 S. DuPont Highway
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302-739-4811 Ext. 279

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Georgia

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Georgia Farm Bureau
PO Box 7068
Macon, GA 31298
912-474-8411

Hawaii

Mr. Michael Barros
2530 10th Avenue
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Honolulu, HI 96816
808-733-9125

Idaho

Mr. Rick Waitley, President
Waitley Associates
1741 Gibson Way
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208-888-0988

Illinois

Ms. Stacy Shane
Illinois Farm Bureau
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1701 Towards Ave
Bloomington, IL 61702-2901
309-557-2219

Indiana

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Mr. Harry L. Pearson
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Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
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West Des Moines, IA 50265-5997
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Kentucky Farm Bureau
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Louisville, KY 40250-0700
502-495-5000

Ms. Rayetta Boone
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Frankfort, KY 40602
502-564-4696

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Ms. Barbara Langley
LA Farm Bureau Federation
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410-783-0647

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603-271-3696

New Jersey

Ms. Maryann Hutson
NJ Dept of Agriculture
CN 330
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-8897 or 633-7463

New Mexico

Mr. E. G. Blanton
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421 N Water
Las Cruces, NM 88001
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408 Kennedy Hall
Cornell University
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701-224-4757

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FAX 405-744-6522

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Caribbean Area State Office
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809-778-0991

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Ag in the Classroom Notes

Room 4307, South Bldg.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Washington, D.C. 20250-0991

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